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Vol. 7 Issue 2

SUMMER 2006

Governor Gregoire Announces Appointments to the Veterans Innovation Program Board

Governor Chris Gregoire recently announced appointments to the Veterans Innovations Program board (VIP).

“The Veterans Innovations Program board has the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of Washington’s National Guard members who were mobilized in support of Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom,” said Governor Gregoire. “The board will develop a program that will make a lasting impact on the lives of our state’s citizen soldiers.”

The seven-member Veterans Innovations Program board was created by House Bill 2754 during the 2006 legislative session. The supplemental operating budget appropriated \$2 million to fund the program.

The Veterans Innovations Program is divided into two areas, the Defender’s Fund and the Competitive Grant Program. The board will work with the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs to design and administer the programs, both of which focus on

meeting the needs of National Guard and Reserve veterans returning from extended deployments.

“These outstanding Washingtonians have a deep interest in serving our state’s veterans and I know they will do a fine job,” said First Gentleman Mike Gregoire, a Vietnam veteran. “I look forward to following their progress as they undertake their new duties.”

Members of the Veterans Innovations Program board include:

John E. Lee, Director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs

Mr. Lee is a Vietnam War veteran and retired Command Sergeant Major of the U.S. Army. He has worked for the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs for the past fifteen years and is responsible for developing the state’s Memorandum of Understanding to serve Washington’s National Guard and Reserve soldiers when they return home from deployments.

See **VIP BOARD**, Page 8

As of June 1, 2006
1,214 Army License Plates
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War Memorial Park II: A Rededication

Nearly 54 years after officials dedicated War Memorial Park I, a "second generation" memorial park has been recreated at the corner of Jackson Avenue and State Route 16 in Tacoma.

The first and original park, built in 1952, stood in the way of construction of the new Narrows Bridge.

Before breaking ground on the Narrows Bridge project in 2002, the Washington State Department of Transportation needed to make room for the new bridge’s anchorage. That meant relocating War Memorial Park from its obscure location to its highly visible spot.

Between summer and fall 2005, bridge builder Tacoma Narrows Constructors rebuilt the park that now huddles between two steep embankments and faces the twin Narrows Bridges.

War Memorial Park II features perennial and annual flower beds, a mix of native shrubs, and several native trees. As you walk along the paved paths notice the Douglas fir, Western Red Cedar and Quaking Aspen.

Like the first park, the serene 3.7 acres of manicured lawn, garden beds and well-placed monuments honor the sacrifices made by men and women of the United State Armed Forces.

The park rededication ceremony, held May 13, was a collaborative event sponsored by the Washington State Department of Transportation, City of Tacoma and War Memorial Park Celebration Committee. Program highlights included a flag-raising and ribbon cutting ceremony.



Tacoma Mayor Bill Baarsma, WDVA Deputy Director Alfie Alvarado, and Sr. Master Sgt Jim Wells, cut the ribbon officially opening War Memorial Park II in Tacoma, to the public on May 13, 2006.



Mt. Rainier from War Memorial Park II

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Washington State
Dept of Veterans Affairs
PO Box 41150
1011 Plum St, 2nd Floor
Olympia, WA 98504-1150

Veteran Voices is published for Washington state veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Veterans Home residents.

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Governor
Christine Gregoire

WDVA Director
John E. Lee

Public Relations & Legislative Manager
Heidi Audette

Communications Consultant 3
Colleen Gilbert

CC3/Graphic Design
Miriam Young

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(877-838-7787) for an application to the veterans homes.

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To obtain this publication in an alternative format call (360) 725-2169.

As of June 1, 2006
690 Air Force
License Plates have been sold.
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Director's Message



John E. Lee
WDVA Director

VIP Board Can Help!

From the front page, you were able to read about a new board, appointed by Governor Gregoire, charged with developing innovative programs to meet the emergency needs of our National Guard and Reserve veterans returning from extended deployments.

This new Veterans Innovations Program provides another tool to address the financial hardships faced by

our citizen soldiers, who answered the call to service.

While the program is not yet completely defined, my commitment to members of the Joint Committee on Veterans' and Military Affairs and the Legislature was that the program will be flexible, responsive and able to document success for veterans and their families.

Of critical importance to anyone experiencing financial hardships is the long-term ability for them to achieve stability and in-turn, be successful. And what better way to ensure that success than to provide assistance in the areas of employment, education or training. Ask yourself, is there a better benefit to our military personnel transitioning out of service than a job?

While many of our citizen soldiers made relatively smooth transitions into their old jobs, there are those who did not. We know that since our state's 11,000

citizen soldiers started returning home, over 1,600 have used the state's unemployment compensation system. The good news is that over 1,350 found a job or enrolled in school or a training program full-time.

But, we know that 250 of them used all their unemployment benefits and may still be looking for work. And that is where the newly appointed Veterans Innovations Program Board can help, by reaching out to these veterans and helping them secure employment, enroll in training or pursue their education.

Over the next several weeks, we will finalize the details of this program and begin the important work of serving our citizen soldiers.

We need your help!

Your knowledge of your community is an invaluable part of this process.

If you know of a veteran that could benefit from this program, pass the word.

If you are a veteran looking for work or need assistance with your veterans benefits – call us today at 1-800-562-2308 or go on-line to locate one of the employment security veteran staff members ready to serve you: <http://fortress.wa.gov/esd/portal/employment/veterans>.

VAAC Members Hear About New Center for Business Development Opening

At the May 18, 2006 Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) meeting, committee members and the public in attendance recognized the work of David Riggs, the Washington Veterans Home Representative to the VAAC. Riggs was appointed on May 28, 2004.

The VAAC heard presentations from Sheila Sebron & Edward Hill on Homeless Veterans issues, received an update on the Armed Forces License Plate program, and a briefing on the new Veterans Innovations Program.

In addition, a presentation was made by Sharon Barber, with the Clover Park Technical College, on a new Center for Business Development the college is opening. The center will offer extensive business related resources for small business owners, including eight state and non-profit providers who will be housed in one building to provide consulting services. For more information on the Clover Park Center for Business Development, contact Sharon Barber, CBD Coordinator, at (253) 589-5962 or email Sharon.Barber@cptc.edu

For information on future VAAC meetings or copies of meeting minutes, visit www.dva.wa.gov and click on 'Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee' or contact April Harris at (360) 725-2167.



David Riggs (left) receives a certificate of appreciation from VAAC Chair Bill Schrier, for his participation on the Washington State Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee from May 28, 2004 until May 18, 2006 as the Retsil Veterans Home representative.

USDOL Approves Grant for WDVA Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project

WDVA was notified they will receive grant funding in 2007 to continue the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Project (HVRP) services to women veterans. The grant is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor –VETS program. HVRP services will be provided in the greater Puget Sound Region including the Seattle Metropolitan Area, King, Pierce, Snohomish, Kitsap, and Thurston Counties.

Last year, HVRP outreach staff provided over 140 assessments and assisted in placing 68

homeless women veterans in housing and 76 in employment. Some of the jobs secured were in the health care sector, accounting, and legal field with an average hourly wage at placement of \$11.43.

The HVRP-Women's Coordinators are:

- Sandra Smith-Myrick, 1-800-562-2308 or 360-586-1085, Pierce, Thurston and Kitsap Counties, and
- Dennis Brown, 206-205-5619, Seattle, King and Snohomish County

Schools, communities join forces to support military kids



At no other time in recent history have more National Guard and Army Reserve "citizen soldiers" been called to active duty in Washington State. When active duty troops, National Guard members and military reservists living in civilian communities are mobilized, their children experience a variety of changes. Many become "military kids" overnight, complete with all the anxieties and stresses of parental separation and frequent media coverage of ongoing operations. These young people may look the same to teachers, friends and community members, but they often need additional support to deal with their new reality. Now, extra help is on the way – **Operation: Military Kids**.

The mission of **Operation: Military Kids (OMK)**, which is funded by the USDA/Army Youth Development Project, is to create support networks for children before, during and after the deployment of a parent or loved one.

In this state, **Operation: Military Kids** began in April 2004, with a partnership between Washington State University Extension 4-H Youth Development, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington National Guard and U.S. Army Reserves.

Washington State Operation: Military Kids project goals include activation of existing networks of school, community, and military personnel to participate in training, receive technical assistance, and creation of linkages with resources that support youth and families of deployed soldiers. OMK builds local community networks of support that are able to educate citizens on the impact of deployments on communities, families, and youth as well as provide educational and support programs for children and youth of Soldiers. Local networks build an OMK Team that will collaboratively implement a broad array of programs and educational opportunities.

OMK consists of five elements:

- ◆ OMK Ready, Set, Go! Awareness Training,
- ◆ Speak Out for Military Kids,
- ◆ Educational Programs for Military Youth,
- ◆ Mobile Technology Lab, and
- ◆ Hero Packs.

OMK Ready, Set, Go! Awareness Training



This training and manual was developed for distribution to state, regional and local teams and key military, school & community stakeholders via coordinated regional and local training efforts to increase understanding of the unique issues facing military youth dealing with the deployment and reintegration of a parent or loved one.

These manuals cover a variety of issues surrounding the effects of deployments on children and are an excellent tool in developing support networks for these young people. The manual is broken into chapters and provide pertinent information such as an introduction to the military and it's customs and culture, the five steps of the deployment process, dealing with the media, fostering resilience in young people and building a community capacity to support military kids.



Educational Programs for Military Youth

The local OMK Teams develop and implement specific social, recreational, and educational programs that address the needs of geographically dispersed military youth. These programs may include summer camps, retreats, lock-ins, recreational programs, Boys and Girls Clubs Programs, Mobile Technology Labs, and 4-H Clubs - all encouraging integration of military and non-military youth. Working in collaboration with National Guard and Reserve, these programs may be implemented in military facilities and use 4-H Extension, Guard, and Reserve staff and volunteers. Programs are developed in locations convenient for military youth and around subject matter interesting and relevant to school age youth and teens of military families.



Mobile Technology Lab (MTL)



The MTL is a 15-laptop computer lab that works in conjunction with the 4-H Mobile Tech Van. The lab also includes digital cameras, digital video camera, Internet accessibility, printer, and scanner. Local Teams can be trained in the use of the lab and van at no cost to them. The Mobile Technology Lab can be scheduled and used by any trained team for programs and activities throughout the year.

Hero Packs

Hero Packs are a support piece for OMK. The overall goal of Hero Packs is to encourage youth groups to participate in a community service project and create Hero Packs to thank the young people who have family members in the National Guard and Army Reserves and have been separated from their loved ones. The Hero Packs thank "suddenly military" youth for the sacrifices their families have made. A hero Pack consists of a backpack filled with items such as Beanie Baby, paper, pens envelopes, Frisbee, 4-H hat, etc. The most important part of the Hero Pack is a personal letter to the youth and family.



(LtoR) Jerry Huff, North Thurston School Dist.; PTSD Contractor Dan Comsia, MA; WDVA PTSD Program Mgr Tom Schumacher; and OSPI - OMK program supervisor Mona Johnson, MA, CPP, CDP are working together to find ways of assisting "Military Kids" in WA Schools.

Washington State Operation Military Kids works with Family Assistance Centers across the state. To assist in your community, contact the closest FAC or call 1-800-346-7492.

Family Assistance Centers Washington Army / Air National Guard

Tacoma
Bldg 27
Camp Murray, WA 98430
(253) 512-8367

Washington Air National Guard
Camp Murray
Building 107
Camp Murray, WA 98430
1-888-268-3608 ext. 3397

Longview/Vancouver
819 Vandercook Way
Longview, WA 98632-4047
(360) 577-2120

Everett
2730 Oakes Ave S.
Everett, WA 98201-3688
(425) 317-3527

Pasco/Walla Walla
127 W Clark St.
Pasco, WA 99301
(509) 546-4384

Yakima
2501 Airport Lane
Yakima, WA 98901
(509) 469-4638

Kitsap Peninsula
1950 Mile Hill Drive
Port Orchard, WA 98366-3526
(360) 280-6504

Spokane
8700 West Electric
Spokane, WA 99224
(509) 458-5416

Spokane
1403 W. Wainwright Blvd
Fairchild AFB
(509) 247-7009

For more information or to get involved in **Washington State Operation Military Kids** visit www.operationmilitarykids.org. Grants are available to local community organizations wishing to participate. Requirements include a partnership between the National Guard or Reserves, 4-H and two community organizations. Contact Kevin Wright, State Program Manager, WSU Extension 4-H at 253-445-4612 or e-mail at: wrightkc@wsu.edu

**As of June 1, 2006
182 National Guard
License Plates have been sold.
Do you have yours?
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In The Spotlight

WDVA welcomes two long-time staff members into new roles



Jerry Towne - Program Manager for the WDVA Veterans Reintegration Services in King County – jerryt@dva.wa.gov or 206-296-7569

WDVA Veterans Reintegration Services in King County

The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and King County Veterans Services partnership includes the Veterans Incarcerated Program, mental health and trauma counseling services, homeless veterans services and housing and financial support.

Jerry will continue to manage the Veterans Community Services Coordinator program that provides services in North Puget Sound, the Inland Empire and Central Washington. In addition, Jerry will continue his involvement in developing a State Veterans Cemetery in Eastern Washington.



Ric Price - Program Manager for the WDVA Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects – ricp@dva.wa.gov or 360-586-1091

WDVA Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects

The Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects offer a structured, individually designed case management plan to make veterans employable and secure by providing, food, transportation, residential stability and employment support services.

Through outreach, assessments and enrollment into program services, veterans are provided services and activities which will develop or increase job readiness.

WDVA has received federal funding for two projects; one for all homeless veterans and one specifically tailored to the needs of homeless women veterans.

In addition to managing the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Projects, Ric will be responsible for the statewide support services for veterans returning from Operations Nobel Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

“Serving Those Who Served” takes on new meaning when the service provider and recipient share a similar background. At the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, the number of employees who are veterans ranks high, providing a personal connection with clients not always achieved in other agencies.

In an effort to introduce these dedicated employees, WDVA will highlight a different veteran/employee each issue.



Shirley Brooks, an LPN at the Washington Soldiers Home, spent 23 years in the Coast Guard Reserve as a Corpsman, while pursuing a career in nursing and raising a family.

Born in Florida, Shirley's family moved to Spokane before she was a year old, although she did spend her high school years back in Florida.

After completing her nurses training, Shirley's brother, who was at the time the Chief of Administration with the 13th Coast Guard District, convinced her of the opportunities available in the Coast Guard Reserves, and in August 1975, he swore her in under the Direct Petty Officer Program.

For 12 years, she spent her 'weekend per month' at Pier 36 in Seattle, where her unit was the first and only unit assigned to do physicals for reservists, saving the Department of Transportation hundreds of thousands of dollars. At that time, the Coast Guard was under the

Department of Transportation (DOT), and reservists would normally have gone to a civilian doctor for these physicals, with DOT reimbursing the reservists for the cost of the visit.

During the balance of her reservist career, Shirley traveled to Honolulu, Guam, Cape Cod, Alaska and California, retiring from the Coast Guard Reserves in December 1998.

Shirley's civilian career has taken her from more than twelve years spent at the Pediatric Care Center in Kent, where she took care of babies going through drug withdrawal, doing insurance claim work and three years spent at Swedish Hospital in the coronary care unit.

Joining the staff at Orting in 2004, she says that there are many similarities between caring for patients at the beginning of life and the end of life.

Shirley has a daughter living in Dallas, while her son and 6 year-old grandson, Tylr (yes, the spelling is correct) live locally. She is looking forward to retirement in March 2007.



Volunteer Drivers Needed for DAV Transportation Network

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) operates a voluntary nationwide transportation network to drive sick and disabled veterans, who have no means of transportation, to and from VA medical facilities for needed treatment.

Across the nation, more than 196 DAV Hospital Service Coordinators (HSC's) operate more than 180 active programs at VA medical centers and outpatient clinics.

These DAV Transportation Network coordinators rely on a corps of nearly 5,000 volunteer drivers to provide transportation for veterans needing this service.

Additionally, DAV departments and chapters purchase and donate most of the vans to VA medical facilities for use in the transportation network.

Since July 2005, DAV drivers in Washington State have volunteered more than 6,411 hours, driven more than 153,227 miles, and transported more than 2,612 veterans to the American Lake Division of VA Puget Sound Health Care System.

Additionally, DAV volunteer drivers contributed more than 10,777 hours, drove more than 170,107 miles, and transported more than 5,199 veterans to the Seattle Division of VA Puget Sound.

In Spokane, DAV volunteers donated 4,716 hours, drove more than 92,490 miles, and transported more than 2,574 veterans.

Walla Walla drivers contributed 3,641 hours, drove more than 79,475 miles, and transported more than 1,168 veterans to the Wainright VA Medical Center in Walla Walla.

DAV Van Driver Information

The DAV continues to recruit volunteers to drive vans throughout the state. To become a DAV van driver, you must apply for both volunteer and driver status at the nearest VA medical center Voluntary Service office or through your local hospital service coordinator.

DAV Transportation Network volunteer drivers must meet the following criteria established by the Department of Veterans Affairs nationally (VHA Handbook 1620.2 Appendix B):

1. Volunteer drivers must have a safe driving record, a valid driver's license, and current motor vehicle bodily-injury liability and property damage insurance.
2. Sign a waiver of compensation on an Application for Voluntary Service.
3. Receive an employee physical and health screening from the VA.
4. Complete a volunteer orientation.
5. Satisfactorily complete all required training, as deemed necessary by the Voluntary Service Office.
6. Additional requirements may be imposed by the local VA medical centers when transporting fragile patients.

All DAV van drivers nationwide and in Washington are volunteers and therefore do not receive payment for the services they provide.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver, contact the VA Volunteer Coordinator at one of the following VA Medical Centers:

American Lake 1-800-329-8387
Spokane - (509) 434-7000

Seattle - 1-800-329-8387
Walla Walla - (509) 525-5200

**As of June 1, 2006
248 Coast Guard License
Plates have been sold.
Do you have yours?
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Washington Veterans Home Highlights

Implant Surgery Aids in Recovery

"Everybody calls me 'Devil Boy' now, because of the bumps on my head, but I don't mind," said Danny White, Soldiers Home resident.

Danny was only 34 years old when he went to live at the Veterans Home in Retsil. He was unable to work because of a Parkinson type illness. Four years later Danny decided to move to the Soldiers Home in Orting, where he has lived ever since.

As the years went by, so did his ability to take care of himself, until he was living in the nursing facility, depending on the nurses to do everything for him – he could not dress himself, feed himself or move himself for over six years.



Recently however, Danny underwent deep skin implant surgery on his head to reverse the effect of the disease.

"At first they told me I was not a good candidate for this surgery, but my doctor at Harborview convinced the others to do it," Danny told me. "I was pretty freaked out, because I was awake the whole time, listening to the drilling surgery noises on my head."

It took two surgeries to complete the process that has enabled Danny to get back to the point of dressing, feeding and walking for himself. Now, at age 56 he has moved back to the assisted care unit. He goes to physical therapy in his electric scooter, hoping to become strong enough to walk all the way to the nurses station without the aid of even a walker.

Retsil Veterans Live High on the HOG

A Silverdale Harley-riders group visited the Washington Veterans Home, bearing donations, cash



Residents Paul Sargent, Ed Bergsagel and Eddie Gee visit with a fellow veteran of the Harley-Davidson group.

Motorcycle riders began arriving before 9 a.m. Sunday at Legend Harley-Davidson in Silverdale to prepare for the ride. Even with the rain, between 100 and 150 riders showed.

"I like riding in a group, although I don't like riding in the rain," said Port Orchard resident Rex Greene. "I just think it's neat getting all these Harleys together, and it's for a good cause."

Known as the Fred Ross Memorial Run, the

event was created at the suggestion of HOG member Cecil Hedrick. He felt the group should do something to remember Ross, a charter member and club director who died. Ross was not a veteran, but he was the son of Donald Ross, a World War II Medal of Honor recipient, and he was an active supporter of many veteran causes.

For the ride, HOG members travel to Retsil to visit the 270 veterans and bring donated items. This year, the group collected enough goods to fill two vans and \$400 cash.

HOG member Marcy Kittelson said local chapter members of the Lady of Harley group visited the 21 female residents of the veterans home, bringing them nail polish, hair scarves, barrettes and other more feminine items.

Leaving as loudly as they came, the Harley riders thundered down the driveway toward the Silverdale Harley-Davidson shop, where owner Dale Bone had transformed his parking lot into a barbecue lunch stop. With the rain beginning to fall, it wasn't long before the riders and the veterans — who came by van — were sitting side-by-side, eating hamburgers, enjoying the live entertainment and ignoring the rain.

Source: Brynn Grimley, Kitsap Sun / May 29, 2006

Spokane Veterans Home, an AGORA Award Finalist

The Spokane Veterans Home was recently selected as a finalist for the AGORA Award, a prestigious award presented by the Spokane Regional Chamber of Commerce for business excellence. In ancient Athens, the AGORA was the center of all business activity, the market place, hence the program name.

"Over 140 regional businesses were nominated, so making it to the finals is a significant accomplishment for each and every Spokane staff member who makes the facility a wonderful place for Veterans to Call Home," said Kathy Magonigle, Administrator of the Spokane Veterans Home. "Thanks to your continued hard work and dedication, our business partners also realize the contributions this facility makes in the veteran's community and the greater but Spokane area!"

This program recognizes those businesses in the community and region that exemplify leadership to support a strong economy and quality of life.

The Home was nominated by an anonymous individual who watched the staff members provide high quality care to our veterans. The Spokane Veterans Home advanced to the finals with the Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs and Second Harvest Food Bank in the large non-profit business category. All finalists were interviewed by

an independent team of volunteer judges. The award was presented to the Second Harvest at a special recognition ceremony on May 31st.

"It was an honor to be nominated for this prestigious community award," Magonigle said. "I'm very proud of the excellent care our staff gives to our residents."



Street Talk

We asked the residents at the Spokane Veterans Home, where their favorite place in Washington or Idaho, is to take a vacation.

"Olympic Rain Forrest! It was affordable and very beautiful and I loved its variety of wildlife and landscape."
Don Lobe



"My favorite spot when I was growing up was Priest Lake. The boating was terrific, the fishing was terrific, and the beaches were beautiful."

Dick Hathaway

"San Juan Islands! I liked riding over on the ferry and then walking around the beaches and looking for shells and listening to the waves crash onto the beach."

Richard Stickels



"Puget Sound! There are all kinds of cafe's and they all have great clam chowder."

Jeanne Moran

"I loved taking the family to all the different lakes and rivers in the area; Deer Lake, Lake Roosevelt, Lake Chelan, Pend Oreille Rivers, Columbia River and Priest Lake. We could fish and swim and have a great time."

Mel Holdaas



Holland Club Inducts Soldiers Home Resident

The Holland Club Patch along with a membership card and Certificate was presented to new Holland Club member Vern Linth (center) during the Memorial Day Ceremony at the WA Soldiers Home in Orting. With Vern are US Submarine Veterans South Sound Base members, John Mansfield, Ken Board and Mike Ellis.

The Holland Club was established in May 1964, to recognize those members who had been qualified in Submarines 50 or more years. The requirements for membership remained the same until 1998 when a change was voted to allow Sub Vets of W.W.II.

Do Your Loved Ones Know You Have Earned Military Funeral Honors?

Since January 1, 2000, all eligible veterans are entitled by law* to receive this benefit.

But, it has to be requested, and too many veterans in Washington are being laid to rest without this final tribute.

If, as a Veteran, you wish to receive Military Funeral Honors, it is important to tell your family now, so they will be prepared to ensure your final request is honored.

During your family's initial visit to a funeral home, they will need to request that Military Funeral Honors be provided at the service.

The Funeral Home Director will need to know the following:

- Name of deceased, date of birth, Social Security number, form DD-214 (discharge), or any other proof of veteran status or eligibility for burial honors.
- Branch of Service (Active, Reserve or National Guard).
- Type of Service (Wartime, Active Duty Retired, Reserve/National Guard Retired).
- Dates of Service.
- Special Awards or Medals (such as Purple Heart)

The Funeral Director should then contact the Military Funeral Honors Program Manager for Washington – **CSM (Ret) Bill Graham at (253) 512-8786**.

**Public Law 106-65 states a Military Funeral Honors detail will consist of not less than two members of the Armed Forces and the detail will, at a minimum, perform a ceremony that includes the folding and presentation of the American Flag to the next of kin and the playing of TAPS.*

Volunteers of Tahoma National Cemetery and the Military Funeral Honors Program Recognized for Service



Members of the Tahoma National Cemetery Support Group, Public Information Center and Honor Guards, as well as statewide members of the Military Funeral Honors Program receive "Veteran Guardian Angel" pins from First Gentleman Mike Gregoire (top photo) and Tahoma National Cemetery director Joe Turnbach (right).



Who is Eligible for Military Funeral Honors?

- Military members on active duty or in the Selected Reserve.
- Former military members who served on active duty and departed under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former military members who completed at least one term of enlistment or period of initial obligated service in the Selected Reserve and departed under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former military members discharged from the Selected Reserve due to a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty.

**As of June 1, 2006
728 Marine Corps
License Plates have been sold.
Do you have yours?
www.dva.wa.gov**

Attention: VSO Honor Guards!

Are You a Partner with the Washington State Military Funeral Honors Program?

Each year, nearly 15,000 veterans in the State of Washington pass away.

Each and every one of them may be entitled to Military Funeral Honors, if requested.

To meet the demands of honoring those requests, the Military Funeral Honors Program needs your help!

Since May 2004, the Military Funeral Honors (MFH) program, under the Washington Army National Guard, has certified 80 Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) statewide as partners in providing this service for Washington Veterans.

Certification allows the MFH Program to pay the post or chapter of a VSO Honor Guard, conducting services with a National Guard team, \$50.00 per service!

To become certified, contact Bill Graham at 253-512-8786 or William.grahamjr@us.army.mil.

You will receive a letter of introduction to the Military Funeral Honors Program, a video to be viewed by all members of your honor guard, and must agree to follow the Department of Defense "chain of events" agenda for delivering the Military Funeral Honors. You will then receive an Authorized Provider Partnership Program (AP3) Certificate and special AP3 pins for each member of your Honor Guard.

"This program is a partnership," said MFH Program Manager Bill Graham. "The majority of the VSO Honor Guards in this state have been providing Funeral Honors for years. By becoming certified, we can help them by providing the Active duty personnel to augment their team and also give some monetary assistance to their associated post or chapter."

Graham's teams have provided Military Funeral Honors to 1,000 veterans during the first eight months of fiscal year 2006. That number has increased from 175 services in 2005 and 48 in 2004.

Approximately 40% of those services were performed at Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, while the majority of them have been at private cemeteries or memorial services throughout Washington.

For more information, visit <http://www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/> or call 253-512-8786.

VA Adds Maps to Online Gravesite Locator

The grave locations of more than three million veterans and dependents buried in national cemeteries can be found more easily



now because the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has added maps of burial sections online that can be printed from home computers and at national cemetery kiosks.

The latest improvement builds upon a service begun two years ago, in which a VA online feature permits family members to find the cemetery in which their loved one is buried.

<http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>

Veterans with a discharge other than dishonorable, their spouses, and eligible dependent children may be buried in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits include a burial flag, Presidential Memorial Certificate, and a government headstone or marker - even if they are not buried in a national cemetery.

<http://www.cem.va.gov>



National Notes



Options Available to WA Veterans Concerned about Identity Theft

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs director John Lee, is advising all Washington veterans, National Guard, Reserve and active duty personnel to review the consumer alert issued by Attorney General Rob McKenna on June 9, 2006.

"It is important that anyone who could be affected know what to look for and how to take steps to protect themselves," said Lee. "We are also calling on our partners in Washington's Veterans Service Organizations to help us in getting the consumer alert out to each of their members."

VA to Provide Free Credit Monitoring

As part of the continuing efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to protect and assist those potentially affected by the recent data theft that occurred at an employee's Maryland home, Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson today announced that VA will provide one year of free credit monitoring to people whose sensitive personal information may have been stolen in the incident.

The VA is soliciting bids from qualified companies to provide a comprehensive credit monitoring solution. VA will ask these companies to provide expedited proposals and to be prepared to implement them rapidly once they are under contract.

After VA hires a credit monitoring company, the Department will send a detailed letter to people whose sensitive personal information may have been included in the stolen data. The Department expects to have the services in place and the letters mailed by mid-August.

Secretary Nicholson also announced VA is soliciting bids to hire a company that provides data-breach analysis, which will look for possible misuse of the stolen VA data. The analysis would help measure the risk of the data loss, identify suspicious misuse of identity information and expedite full assistance to affected people.

People who believe they may be affected by the data theft can go to www.firstgov.gov for more information. VA also continues to operate a call center that people can contact to get information about this incident and learn more about consumer-identity protections. That toll free number is 1-800-FED INFO (1-800-333-4636). The call center is operating from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm (EDT), Monday-Saturday.

Source: Federal VA News Release, June 21, 2006

Credit Freeze Available for Washington Veterans

Washington veterans and active-duty military whose personal information was potentially compromised in the recent U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs data security breach have the ability to request a credit report security freeze to help protect themselves from identity theft.

"A credit report security freeze is an important tool to block identity thieves from opening unauthorized accounts or loans in your name," Attorney General Rob McKenna said. "Veterans should be aware that they, too, will not be able to open new credit while a freeze is in place."

Individuals can request that a freeze be temporarily lifted for the purpose of obtaining new credit. Credit bureaus may charge a fee for this service.

While only a freeze will block access to a credit report, a fraud alert is a less restrictive option available to consumers and may help them know who is accessing their credit history. Individuals can have a security freeze and a fraud alert simultaneously.

Find out more about the credit freeze and fraud alert at www.atg.wa.gov.

Veterans and military who receive letters from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and want to request a credit report security freeze should take the following steps:

1. Write to each of the three major credit reporting agencies requesting a credit report security freeze. (Although the credit bureaus generally share information reported to them that is related to a fraud alert or credit freeze, they are not required to do so.) Keep copies of your request letters for your records.

2. Include the following with your request:

- A copy of your letter from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (Keep the original for your records.)
- A copy of the Veterans Affairs mailing envelope addressed to you. (Keep the original for your records.)
- A copy of the Montgomery County police Department letter verifying the theft. Download the letter from the WDVA website at: www.dva.wa.gov.

3. Send your request and documentation by **certified mail** (required) to each of the following addresses:

Equifax Security Freeze

P.O. Box 105788

Atlanta, GA 30348

Experian Security Freeze

P.O. Box 9554

Allen, TX 75013

Trans Union Security Freeze

P.O. Box 6790

Fullerton, CA 92834-6790

In addition, all individuals notified that their information was stolen should take these precautionary steps:

1. Carefully review statements from banks and creditors and notify the business immediately if you notice any suspicious activity.

2. Obtain copies of your credit reports from the three major reporting bureaus and review them carefully for accuracy. If you have placed a fraud alert on your credit reports, your reports will be sent to you automatically. All consumers can obtain a free credit report every 12 months, regardless of whether they have been identity theft victims. Call 1-877-322-8228 or make a request online at <http://www.annualcreditreport.com>.

Source: WA Attorney General consumer Alert, June 9, 2006.

'Active Duty' Alerts Help Protect Military Personnel from Identity Theft

Federal Trade Commission - Bureau of Consumer Protection - Office of Consumer & Business Education

The last thing you want to worry about while you're on deployment is someone assuming your identity to commit financial fraud. Now, you don't have to. Amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act allow you to place an "active duty alert" in your credit report. According to the Federal Trade Commission, one of the agencies that enforces the FCRA, the alert requires creditors to verify your identity before granting credit in your name.

If you are a member of the military and away from your usual duty station, you may place an "active duty alert" on your credit report to help minimize the risk of identity theft while you are deployed. When a business sees the alert on your credit report, it must verify your identity before issuing you credit. The business may try to contact you directly, but if you're on deployment, that may be impossible. As a result, the law allows you to use a personal representative to place or remove an alert. Active duty alerts on your report are effective for one year, unless you request that the alert be removed sooner. If your deployment lasts

longer, you may place another alert on your report.

To place an "active duty" alert, or to have it removed, call the toll-free fraud number of one of the three nationwide consumer reporting companies: Equifax, Experian, or Trans Union. The company will require you to provide appropriate proof of your identity, which may include your Social Security number, your name, address, and other personal information.

- ◆ Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; www.equifax.com
- ◆ Experian: 1-888-EXPERIAN (397-3742); www.experian.com
- ◆ Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289; www.transunion.com

Contact only one of the three companies to place an alert - the company you call is required to contact the other two, which will place an alert on their versions of your report, as well. If your contact information changes before your alert expires, remember to update it.

When you place an active duty alert, your name will be removed from the nationwide

consumer reporting companies' marketing lists for prescreened offers of credit and insurance for two years - unless you ask that your name be placed on the lists before then. Pre screened offers -sometimes called "preapproved" offers - are based on information in your credit report that indicates you meet certain criteria set by the offeror.

To learn more about identity theft and your credit rights under the FCRA and the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, visit ftc.gov/credit.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft, and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

Hats Off



...To **Joe Zelazny, Jr.** who successfully, with his proposal, convinced the Elks Grand Lodge Ritualistic Committee to include the presentation of the POW/MIA flag in the Flag Day Ritual. As of June 14, 2006 the flag honoring Prisoners of War and soldiers still Missing in Action officially became part of Flag Day ceremonies for the first time at Elks Lodges nationwide.



...To the **4th Division, Pacific Northern Region of the National Model Railroad Association** who donated a model railroad to the VA Hospital at American Lake. The Marklin three-rail trains are running beautifully in the Recreation/Rehab building where it can be used by patients and staff.



...To **Fred Kogin**, recognized as Citizen of the Year for Grays Harbor and Pacific counties.

Kogin is a Korean War veteran and a decorated Lion dedicated to helping yesterday's soldiers deal with the realities and red tape of military service.

The 70-year-old Hoquiamite has spent over half his life in the Hoquiam Lions Club. He has been president twice and is currently on the board of directors. When he's not hanging out with the guys at the Lions Club, Kogin is usually assisting his fellow veterans as Grays Harbor's only veteran service officer. He helps veterans apply for benefits, negotiate with the VA and understand their rights. Though the contract employee only has office hours one day a week, he makes himself available "24/7" at home.

"This job can be everything from sitting here with a retired veteran who just lost his wife and just wants to talk, to inquiring about health benefits," explained Kogin, a former Naval sonarman first class.



VIP BOARD

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Karen Lee, Director of the Employment Security Department

A West Point graduate, Ms. Lee served in the U.S. Army for five years before attending the University of Washington School of Law and obtaining her law degree. Ms. Lee has initiated a statewide 'HireVetsFirst' campaign to encourage businesses to hire veterans following their military service.

Colonel Mary J. Forbes, Director of the Human Resources Division and J1, Joint Forces Command, Washington National Guard

Ms. Forbes is a key leader in the statewide partnership for assisting Guard and Reserve personnel transitioning from combat to civilian life.

Charles Earl, Executive director of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Mr. Earl, a three-year U.S. Air Force veteran, served as a Lieutenant on bases within the United States. The State Community and Technical Colleges provide tuition waivers to veterans, the dependents of disabled veterans or veterans killed in the line of duty and also provide veterans assistance with GI Bill benefits.

Sue Mauermann, Deputy director of the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED)

Ms. Mauermann oversees the agency's key initiatives and manages CTED's six divisions: community services, local government, housing services, international trade, economic development and energy policy. CTED is the state agency responsible for enhancing and promoting sustainable communities and economic vitality in Washington.

Michael D. Hudson, Executive director of the Institute for Workforce Development and Economic Sustainability, a not-for-

profit affiliate of the Association of Washington Business

Mr. Hudson, founder of the Institute for Workforce Development, is a sixteen-year veteran of the U.S. Army and Washington National Guard.

Captain Larry Seaquist of the U.S. Navy (Ret.)

A thirty-two year Navy veteran, Mr. Seaquist is active in Kitsap County veterans' issues, including the Military Committee of the Port Orchard Chamber of Commerce.

For additional information on the Veterans Innovations Program, please contact the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs at: 1-800-562-0132.

**As of June 1, 2006
778 Navy License Plates
have been sold.
Do you have yours?
www.dva.wa.gov**

Attention!

Armed Forces License Plates now available to eligible veterans/active duty/Guard & Reserves/widows(ers) at any Vehicle Licensing Office



The original cost of an Armed Forces plate(s) is \$40.00 plus any applicable licensing fees. When registration is due, you pay an additional \$30.00 to keep the Armed Forces plate(s) even if you have not had the plate(s) for a full year. \$28 from your purchase and renewal is directed to the Veterans Stewardship Account and is tax deductible.

\$28 from each sale will help support:

- ★ Programs/services for homeless veterans;
- ★ Memorials honoring veterans; and/or
- ★ Maintenance of a future state veterans' cemetery

1-800-562-0132

NEW ARMED FORCES LICENSE PLATES

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check the Events page at www.dva.wa.gov

Korean War Memorial - Olympia
July 1, 2006 / 11:00 am - 2:00 pm
503-690-8310

Governors Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee
Yakima
July 6, 2006
April Harris 360-725-2167

Third Annual Ride and Rally for the Troops
July 9, 2006
Destination Harley of Fife
www.ReachAwareness.org
reachawareness@yahoo.com

American Legion State Convention
July 13-16, 2006
Yakima, WA

Vets Commission Regional Town Hall Meeting
July 20, 2006 / 7:00 p.m. - 9:00
LaQuinta Inn & Suites
1425 East 27th Street
Tacoma, WA 98421-2200

Fisher House Benefit Motorcycle Ride
July 22, 2006
American Legion Riders
Dean Gruber
rainieriders264@yahoo.com

First Annual Clallam County Korean War Memorial Service
July 29, 2006 / 10:00 am - 11:30
Sequim View Cemetery
1505 Sequim-Dungeness Rd.
Sequim, WA
Gerald Rettela 360-457-6994
360-477-1025

Annual Korean War Veterans Memorial Wreathlaying
July 29, 2006 / 11:00 am
Korean War Veterans Memorial Capitol Campus - Olympia
Sponsored by The Northwest Chapter of The Chosin Few
Max Diamond 253-838-2004

Cascade Warbirds Fly-In and Puget Sound Military Vehicle Collectors Club
Kelso, WA
August 4-6, 2006
Kelso/Longview Regional Airport Parrot Way
Veterans and active duty military organizations are invited to host booths
Doug Reid 360-577-6757
Elizabeth Johnson 360-578-0908

Veterans Information and Assistance Fair
Open to the Public!
August 5, 2006
9 am - 4 pm

Kelso/Longview Regional Airport
Kelso, WA
Open to all veterans
Ric Price 360-586-1071
ricp@dva.wa.gov

Purple Heart Recipient Recognition Day
August 7, 2006

Military Retiree Seminar
September 8, 2006
8 am - 12:30 pm
Bangor Naval Base
Bangor Theater
ALL SERVICES WELCOME
Bob Dahl (360)476-5116 or
1-866-572-4341

POW/MIA Recognition Day
September 15, 2006

Tri-County Veteran's Stand Down
Sept. 16, 17, 2006
Sat. 8:00 am - 6:00 pm
Sun. 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Northeast WA Fairgrounds
Colville, WA
Larry Ussery - 509-684-3398
Ken Walden - 509-685-6140
Richard Langford - 509-685-6135

Veterans Information and Assistance Fair - Sept. 26, 2006
Central WA State Fair
Yakima, WA
509-457-2736 / 509-457-0951